



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

In August 2022, I wrote to you to underscore concern over ongoing disputes between the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the negative implications for Iraq's stability and economic development. In the face of persistent threats posed by Iran to both Iraq and the United States, it is critical that Iraqi government officials resolve these issues in a way that strengthens Iraq and benefits the Iraqi people.

The formation of a new government under Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in October presents an important opportunity for Iraq's long term-development. However, officials in Baghdad and the federally recognized Kurdistan region must both make concrete commitments to work together to constructively advance a permanent, mutually acceptable, settlement of the longstanding dispute related to the disposition of Iraq's natural resources. I am concerned the recent Federal Supreme Court decision regarding the federal budget allocation suggests this unresolved constitutional dispute may continue to undermine prospects for reconciliation between Baghdad and the federally recognized Kurdistan region and further threaten confidence at a time of severe hardship for many Iraqis.

In recent weeks, Iraq has made critical progress in terms of transparency in public spending and resource allocation. It is vital that Iraq's government build on this progress by ensuring public resources are used to address the urgent needs of the Iraqi people, including government employees, as opposed to being misappropriated by, or allocated to, malign actors. Iraqi unity and solidarity, demonstrated through transparently administered federal budget transfers to the Kurdistan Regional Government, will send a strong message of deterrence to Iran in the face of its repeated missile and drone attacks that violate Iraqi sovereignty and have killed civilians.

In your engagements with senior Government of Iraq officials, I urge you to press leaders in Baghdad and the Kurdistan region to make the political decisions necessary to protect Iraq's

sovereignty, fulfill Iraqi's potential, and benefit the Iraqi people. The United States must remain committed to working with all of our Iraqi partners to foster a stable, sovereign, and democratic Iraq free from malign influence and in the best interests of Iraqi citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael T. McCaul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Michael" on the first line and "T. McCaul" on the second line.

MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman